

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT  
Attorney Docket Q60899

Page 2, line 24, insert the heading **--Summary of the Invention--**.

Page 3, lines 3-10, delete the paragraph in its entirety and insert:

--This object is achieved according to the invention by a communications network for exchanging data packets of ATM connections, which is hierarchically constructed to include:

a plurality of network nodes in a lowest network level, the nodes being in each case directly or indirectly connected, by at least one possible physical path, on the one hand to terminal devices and on the other hand to every other network node of the same network level,

a plurality of network nodes in a higher network levels, which are in each case administratively responsible for a peer group of network nodes situated in an underlying network level, each network node situated in a higher network level being physically connected to at least one network node of the group for which it is responsible and being logically connected to every other network node of this group and to every other network node of the group to which it itself belongs, each network node of a higher network level being responsible for providing that each network node of a lower network level for which it is responsible can when necessary use the connection data which it requires to determine the path information for the data packets of a concrete ATM connection in this communications network, and

said communications network further including a data bank (DB), in which connection data are kept available, arranged in network nodes of a lower network level, each data bank in a network node of a lower network level keeping available connection data for a closer environment, with at least one additional data bank, which keeps available connection data for a wider environment, being provided and assigned to a network node, with the network node of a higher network level which is responsible for a network node to which an additional data bank is assigned also comprising means for maintaining the connection data in this additional data bank.

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